To: Department Chairs, Directors and Deans  
From: Don Moynihan, Chair, Social Studies Divisional Committee  
Re: Tenure Reviews during the 2015-2016 Academic Year

Documents relevant to the submission of tenure dossiers to the Social Studies Divisional Committee, including the most recent version of the committee’s tenure guidelines and template letters, are available at www.secfac.wisc.edu/faculty-divisions.htm

The divisional committee seeks to work with departments to ensure fair and judicious reviews of candidates. Please contact me or Divisional Committees Coordinator Michaela Aust (michaela.aust@wisc.edu or 263-5741) with any questions, comments or suggestions.

The committee’s tenure guidelines describe the divisional committee’s standards and expectations. Below are some brief highlights:

- The department chair’s cover letter is the single most important document in the dossier. Please take the time to write a concise yet comprehensive review according to the guidelines. More than half the cases that are denied by the Social Studies Divisional Committee are due to weak dossiers that did not fully articulate support for the candidate’s promotion.

- We expect a tenure file to explain how a particular mixture of activities relates to the department’s mission, the terms of the candidate’s appointment and the communication of expectations and support provided to the candidate.

- Outside reviewers should be outstanding scholars in the candidate’s field. Reviewers should be at arm’s length from the candidate. In most cases, departments should avoid soliciting letters from co-authors, previous professors or classmates, current or former departmental colleagues, or close professional friends. Many chairs find it helpful to include these criteria with the solicitation. Questions regarding the application of this ideal should be directed to me or to Michaela Aust.

- Research collaboration should be documented indicating the effort among team members.

- Teaching should be fully documented, highlighting innovations as appropriate. The committee expects to see clear evidence of annual departmental peer review of teaching. An example of a peer evaluation of teaching form is available on the website, if that is helpful to your department.

- Extension/Outreach activities where appropriate should be fully documented, including their impact on the faculty member’s research and teaching efforts.

- A number of exemplary dossiers from past successful tenure cases are available for review. To arrange a time to look over these dossiers or to seek assistance with any questions or problems relating to the tenure process and the divisional committee, please contact Divisional Committees Coordinator Michaela Aust (at michaela.aust@wisc.edu or 263-5741).

A closing plea: The committee’s calendar commonly gets overloaded in the spring. Please submit dossiers sooner rather than later. Thank you.